

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

South Dakota Civil Support Team trains with first responders

By Staff Sgt. Luke Olson
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – The South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team participated in a multi-agency first-responder exercise at the water reclamation plant in Sioux Falls, March 19.

The incident exercise involved a simulated explosion to one of the buildings on site, simulated casualties and possible chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives contaminants in the area. The incident commander, from Sioux Falls Fire Rescue, had a number of agencies involved in support as they worked the situation based on priority of threat.

"Today, the goal was to be better prepared for a radioactive event and gain more experience working with outside agencies," said Master Sgt. Alan Tuschen, 82nd CST operations noncommissioned officer. "At any training event we conduct, we are trying to exercise our procedures and how to make ourselves better and more efficient so we can advise an incident commander quickly and safely."

The state and local first responders have a proven capability to deal with most emergencies. However, if a situation involves weapons of mass destruction or a military chemical agent it could quickly overwhelm the existing agencies. The 82nd is trained to handle these unique circumstances. Once called upon, the CST integrates into the Incident Command System in support of the incident commander.

"We all receive different training and techniques so it helps everyone involved consider a new, more effective way of doing business," said Tuschen.

Sioux Falls Fire Rescue, the Sioux Falls bomb squad, the Department of Criminal Investigations bomb squad, and the 82nd CST all worked together as the situation evolved. Once the CST was called upon by the IC, they moved into action and assessed the situation for CBRNE characteristics, provided assistance and advisement on appropriate response actions to the civilian responders and worked to identify any unknown substances/agents that may be present in the area of explosives.

"In the event of an actual response, it helps us skip the steps of meeting who we will be working with and learning their procedures," said Tuschen. "We already know who we need to talk to, we have an idea of what priorities each entity has, their equipment capabilities and during these exercises everyone learns something new."

The CST combines the skills of six sections: command, operations/administration, survey, medical, communications, and logistics/decontamination.

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The unit comprised of 22 full-time Army and Air Guardsmen who bring a wide range of career experience from the military and civilian sectors. Each team member completes over 850 hours of technical training by agencies including National Fire Academy, Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and Environmental Protection Agency.

The 82nd's mission is to support local and state authorities at domestic incident sites by identifying agents and substances, assessing current and projected consequences, advising on response measures and handling requests from the governor for additional military support. This includes incidents involving the intentional or unintentional release of CBRNE and natural or man-made disasters that result or could result in the catastrophic loss of life or property in the United States. The CST is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for rapid deployment for response operations.

"Getting to know these professionals involved, working with them and learning from them is always invaluable training," said Tuschen. "It helps us to provide a disciplined, well trained and equipped team to protect the people and assets of South Dakota and the United States."

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



150319-Z-LQ671-015: Members of the South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team prepare the down range monitoring equipment (bomb robot) during a training exercise at the water reclamation plant in Sioux Falls, S.D., March 19, 2015. The CST will dress the robot with an array of chemical and radiation monitoring equipment to detect if there is a hazard present in order to determine what level of personal protective equipment is needed to make entry into the incident area. (Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Luke Olson/Released)



150319-Z-LQ671-025: Sgt. Kelley Trebesch, a survey specialist with the South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team, dons her protective gear before heading down range during a training exercise at the water reclamation plant in Sioux Falls, S.D., March 19, 2015. The survey team is known as the 'heartbeat' of the CST and goes into the contaminated area to obtain samples of potentially hazardous solids and liquids for the unit's mobile lab to analyze. (Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Luke Olson/Released)



150319-Z-LQ671-033: South Dakota National Guard 82nd Civil Support Team survey team members Sgt. Kelley Trebesch and Spc. Patrick Moran deploy AreaRAE Steel monitors which provide real-time wireless measurements for a range of potential threats during a training exercise in Sioux Falls, S.D., March 19, 2015. The 82nd CST primarily uses the AreaRAE to monitor hydrogen sulfide, lower explosive limit (to see if the air could be a flammable environment), carbon monoxide, oxygen (to make sure the air can sustain life) and gamma radiation. (Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Luke Olson/Released)

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